

Comments of Michael L. Stranathan, KC8WUC

As times have changed and technology has advanced in the field of commercial and amateur communications, various means of communicating have become obsolete or outmoded, such as the telex and telegraph. At the present time, the United States is one of the few countries that requires a demonstrated knowledge and proficiency in Morse Code at the amateur licensing level to achieve high frequency privileges. This is no longer the case in several countries and is no longer required under ITU rules. Non-governmental bodies, such as IARU, that serve to protect the interests and preserve amateur radio do not see this as being necessary to the continuation of the amateur radio service. In the commercial service, Morse Code has become relegated to a historical anecdote, even in the United States, as the U.S. Coast Guard no longer monitors 500kHz and proficiency in Morse Code has been replaced by use of satellite and VHF/UHF communication as part of GMDSS. It would seem to reason that a service that is essential and used on a continuous basis (i.e., emergency marine communications, distress signaling) would rely on the most advanced and capable system possible. As such, in choosing to use a system that includes use of voice and data transmission (i.e., GMDSS) under the SOLAS convention, a great deal of faith has been placed on the competency of the operator in their knowledge of radio operations without requiring knowledge of Morse Code. It is my fervent belief that many amateur radio operators possess the same skill and knowledge level required to provide essential communications, however, are unable to do so unnecessarily within the high frequency range due to current licensing restrictions.

It is this writer's opinion that the Element 1 requirement, demonstration of proficiency in Morse Code be eliminated as a prerequisite for access to high frequency privileges and those with Technician licenses be granted or grandfathered into Technician Plus status. Licensees who have passed the elements necessary for higher class privileges that have not passed the required Morse Code element who are within 365 days of their passing date should be able to submit proof of passing in order to earn the commensurate level of privileges without passing Element 1.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael L. Stranathan- KC8WUC

290 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street

Salem, Ohio 44460-1516

KC8WUC@yahoo.com